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A1. I am the business director of the International Choir Biennale Haarlem, a biennial festival. This festival was originally set up as a stage for professional ensembles. There are 800,000 choral singers in the Netherlands, we wanted something with that too. That is why we started with participation projects, to bridge the gap between professional and amateur singers.

A2.

The aim of the festival is to build bridges between professional and amateur vocal ensembles. This works very well. We do this mainly through educational projects, it is always about learning (from each other and from professionals).

We are a niche festival, with about 20,000 visitors.

The festival programs in Haarlem and in Amsterdam. Haarlem is the basis, where all activities take place. Amsterdam is metropolitan, where we can do experimental things in the field of choral music.

B1.

Atmosphere is great, people become happy, get energy from it. The frameworks are clear. We have also learned a lot, and always organize it well. The participants know that they can trust us, our reputation is good, and that also contributes to the mutual atmosphere.

People are very happy about it. They also learn from it.

B2.

B3.

Choral music is an expression of what happens in society, and we consciously program that in Amsterdam. We show innovative works there.

Singing is an essential form of expression of people, singing, dancing, being part of being human. People have always done it, all over the world, singing had become a neglected child in Western Europe, as opposed to amplified music. Think that we have been a kind of precursor, singing is part of it, it is necessary, it is important, it expresses a lot. Is not only about art, it's about life. It connects people, people can experience a flow, in singing together, something happens.

C1.

We mainly try to connect amateurs and professionals. We are now working hard to investigate how we can program migrant music, or music from refugees, within our festival. What should we talk about, about migration, about flights, expatriation? We have to be on the go, in our multicultural society, but we must also stick to the festival's own identity.

C2.

When programming non-Western European music, we need to find a way to do that in a way that also reaches our audience (highly educated, grey). Or can we also reach another audience with a different background? That is a marketing story, but also a musical story. When do we have something, for which they come to a concert hall.

The projects with amateurs only have positive aspects. The only negative is that we do want to

have a certain level. We have auditions, people have to describe what they can, must predict. Although we try to be approachable, there is a slight threshold. The challenge is to balance.

C3/C4:

Education as a binder, you can learn something here. It is usually several weekends in which people can learn.

Unplanned results: the delight of people, that it gives energy, that it zooms around the city.

Last time we also programmed the Haarlem choir school. That had an overwhelming effect on the city.

D1.

I am asking a few people for advice. What else can we develop, where is the need.

D2.

What I want to say is that singing and ensemble singing is one of the 'art forms, in which there is a sliding scale, between amateurs and professionals. I do not like the word amateurs, because it is essential for people to do this at any level.

Profs do it for money, do not underestimate amateur art. We are talking about bridges, actually it is about sharing a field, the field of ensemble singing.